



Missouri Department of Natural Resources

MISSOURI SOIL AND WATER DISTRICTS COMMISSION

TAN-TAR-A RESORT

Parasol I/II

Osage Beach, Missouri

November 28, 2005

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: John Aylward, Elizabeth Brown, Kathryn Braden, Richard Fordyce, Leon Kreisler, and Baughn Merideth

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS: DEAN THOMAS PAYNE, UNIV. OF MISSOURI: David Baker; FRED FERRELL, DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE: Dan Engemann; DOYLE CHILDERS, DEPT OF NATURAL RESOURCES: Mike Wells

ADVISORY MEMBERS PRESENT: SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM: Sarah Fast; NRCS: Roger Hansen; MASWCD: Steve Oetting

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Davin Althoff, Gary Baclesse, Milt Barr, Lori Bax, Jim Boschert, Allan Clarke, Scott Diebold, Noland Farmer, Tricia Jackson, Gina Luebbering, Theresa Mueller, Marcy Oerly, James Plassmeyer, Ron Redden, Judy Stinson, Ken Struempfh, Cody Tebbenkamp, Lindsay Tempinson, Chris Wieberg, Bill Wilson

OTHERS PRESENT: DISTRICTS: BATES: Brad Powell, Joyce Rider-Diehl; BARTON: Ben Reed; BENTON: Keigh Johnson; BUCHANAN: Donald Jordan; CASS: Earlene Davis, Janice Fogle, Nathan Kirchhoff, Kevin Reed; CAMDEN: Ernie Calvert; CLARKE: Henry Heinze; HOWARD: Beverly Dometorch; CRAWFORD: Fannie Lea; DAVIES: Tom Lambert; GASCONADE: Diana Mayfield, Grover Mayfield, Debbie Raaf; GREENE: Deneen Jenkins; GRUNDY: John Rice; HOLT: Bruce Biermann; JACKSON: Bill Bohnert; JEFFERSON: George Engelbach; LACLEDE: Jim Spreitzer; LIVINGSTON: Steve Hopper; MADISON: Harry Robbins; MARION: Keith Lovelace; MONTGOMERY: Gayle Adams, Tom Kramer, Bob Ridgley, Brenda VanBooven, Ann Whitehead; NEW MADRID: Scott Allgier; OREGON: Sarah Wiggs; PEMISCOTT: Carol Barnes; PHELPS: Paula Wade; PULASKI: Sharon Gifford; RANDOLPH: Shelly Sumpter; RIPLEY: Rachel Griffin; SHANNON: David Dix; STODDARD: Shannon Lemmon, Jim Stuever; SULLIVAN: Shelly Swank; VERNON: Fred Feldmann; WARREN: Wilmer Erfling, Deb Niederer; WORTH: Richard Mullock; **STATE OF MISSOURI:** Attorney General's Office: Shelly Woods; Department of Natural Resources: Richard Moore; **OTHERS:** FARM BUREAU: Kelly Smith; MASWCD: Peggy Lemons, MLICA: Eddie Gilmore; NATURE CONSERVATORY: Steve Mahfood; NRCS: Diane Bradley, Dick Purcell

**JOINT MEETING
MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS
AND
MISSOURI SOIL AND WATER DISTRICTS COMMISSION**

A. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Elizabeth Brown and Steve Oetting opened the meeting at 8:00 AM by welcoming everyone. Introductions of the Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Area Directors and the members of the Missouri Soil and Water Districts Commission followed the welcome.

B. BUDGET UPDATE

Milt Barr presented a review of the first quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2006 revenue and expense summaries, and an update on the estimated budget planning changes for FY07. Mr. Barr provided a quick review of the Sales Tax Revenue Cycle, stating that 1/10 of 1 percent of the General Sales and Use Tax is split evenly between State Parks and the Soil and Water Conservation Program. The Department of Revenue collects the revenues and deposits them on a daily basis into the program fund. The deposits usually reflect the previous 30 or more days' activities depending on what point in the quarter for business collection and reporting.

In the first quarter, there was a 2.4 percent sales tax revenue deposit increase over the first quarter last year. In comparing FY05 and FY06, the consumer spending cycles were basically the same for both years, with somewhat stronger sales for FY06. Mr. Barr indicated the department's-planning rate for FY06 used an increase of 3.5 percent for the Parks and Soils Tax, which has not changed for the whole year planning. In reviewing and comparing first quarter expenditures, there was a one percent decrease for FY06 compared to FY05. The first quarter of FY06, expenditures were \$6,079,228; in FY05, first quarter expenditures were \$5,6,110,411.

Mr. Barr stated that the FY06 budget, revenues, and expenditure figures were within acceptable limits and appeared to be on track for another successful year.

The total approved budget for the current fiscal year is \$41,812,998. This amount included the program's core budget projected expenditures as well as the cost

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transfers and other expenditures from the Soils Sales Tax fund. Mr. Barr also reviewed the changes for FY06 that included approximately \$1,000,000 that was budgeted for the contractor costs of the MoSWIMS Information Technology project however, the project manager feels it will likely cost less than planned not counting any added work. The only actual change to the FY06 approved core budget was the \$231,042 increase in the District Benefits Plan that was approved by the commission. Current projections for FY07 include the transfers and other costs now being listed on the pie charts of approximately \$2,600,000. The projected total for FY07 was \$41,566,456, which included \$258,243 in the district benefits increase that was also approved by the commission.

C. FY05 REPORTS

1. FY05 Regular Cost-Share Evaluation Report

Noland Farmer presented a report and an overview of the Cost-Share Program for Fiscal Year (FY) 2005. For FY05, the commission allocated \$24,500,000 to the districts. The districts obligated \$21,000,000 and claimed \$20,100,000, which was approximately 82 percent of the funds that were made available.

According to the report, \$20,100,000 was used to pay 5,948 claims, for an average cost of \$3,377.04. This amount was higher than FY04, which used \$19,600,000 for 5,874 claims at an average cost of \$3,338.89. The 5,874 practices in FY04 saved almost 3,000,000 tons of soil, whereas the 5,948 in FY05 saved 3,200,000 tons of soil. In FY04 the cost for each ton of soil saved was \$6.64, as compared to \$6.31 in FY05.

Mr. Farmer proceeded to cover the number of practices that were completed in FY05.

Expenditures for FY04 ranged from 41 percent for terraces, 28 percent for water impoundment reservoirs, 5.5 percent for planned grazing systems, 8 percent for sediment retention basins, 5.5 percent for sod waterways, 5 percent for permanent vegetative cover improvement, 3.5 percent for permanent vegetative improvement and enhancement, and 3.5 percent for all other practices. In comparing FY04 to FY05, there was only a one percent increase in the total number of practices completed in FY05. The significant change was less money spent on terraces in 2004 and more on water impoundment reservoirs. There was an approximate 5.5 percent increase in the amount of money spent on terraces from FY04 to FY05.

Next Mr. Farmer proceeded to cover the average tons of soil saved per practice and tons of soil saved per practice for FY05. The Permanent Vegetative Cover

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Establishment (DSL-1) and Permanent Vegetative Cover Improvement (DSL-2) had the highest average tons of soil saved per practice. The practice with the highest cost per ton of soil saved was Water Impoundment Reservoir. This was because it has a high cost ratio compared to the amount of soil it saves. The cost per ton of soil saved for all practices in FY01 was \$5.24, FY02 was \$5.44, FY03 was \$6.10, FY04 was \$6.64, and in FY05 the average cost was \$6.31.

Richard Fordyce asked about DSL-1 and DSL-2 increase. Mr. Farmer stated that the tons of soil saved increased. Mr. Fordyce asked why. Mr. Farmer stated the program had expected it to go down based upon what they had heard about RUSLE2. Mr. Farmer stated that Roger Hansen might have a better idea as to why there was an increase. According to Mr. Hansen, the soil erosion rate was calculated by RUSLE2 and if it has an excessive soil loss then it would qualify for practices for state cost-share. Over the years the soil loss calculation has been adjusted. Mr. Hansen stated that some sites had higher erosion rates. Mr. Hansen stated that he did not think he could explain how or why it happened. Leon Kreisler asked if there had been any thoughts given to shifting money toward the practices that were more effective. Sarah Fast stated the commission could look at that in terms of practices, if the commission would want to add additional ceilings on practices or take practices off the docket. Elizabeth Brown stated she thought that was the district decision to choose practices that best fit their districts and that would be hard for the commission to indicate what would fit in all districts. Mr. Kreisler stated that it does not matter what district it was if it is tons of soil saved, because that is what the commission is interested in. Mr. Kreisler asked that on the ones that were more effective were they limited by the funds available to them on practices. Ms. Fast answered that in some cases they are. George Engelbach stated that he felt that the water needed to be kept in the hills, and storm water management should become a priority. He stated that if the limits set by the commission are then lowered by the districts, if a cooperator could appeal because they were not getting the maximum benefit for their practice if the district did not pay enough at the district level.

2. FY05 Loan Interest Share Evaluation Report

Marcy Oerly presented the Fiscal Year (FY) 2005 Loan Interest-Share annual report as well as a brief history and overview of the program.

The Loan Interest-Share Program was established in 1985, and the purpose is to promote the use of management practices and conservation equipment that helps prevent or control soil erosion. The program provides a refund of a portion of the

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interest on a conventional loan obtained for eligible erosion control or prevention practices, and equipment that is included in the participant's conservation plan.

Originally, the commission set aside \$10 million in the soils fund for the program. The idea was that \$10 million would be invested and the interest earned would be used to pay interest rebates on loans. In 1992 the program obligated all its funds and the program was temporarily closed to new applicants allowing a revision in policies concerning the use of the program and limited funding. At that point it was decided that the \$10 million would be transferred back into the sales tax fund the Loan Interest-Share rebates would be paid from an annual appropriation of \$800,000. This amount was used because staff assumed a maximum interest rate of eight percent would be needed to meet refund obligations for a \$10 million program.

At the beginning of FY04 the commission cut \$500,000 from the annual \$800,000 because of the large amount accumulating funds in the Loan Interest fund. Of the \$500,000, \$250,000 was redirected to the cost-share program and the other \$250,000 was used to fund the new educational grants.

Ms. Oerly proceeded to give the overview of the program. The participant's regular lender provides the actual loan with a minimum principle amount of \$2,500 and a maximum of \$25,000. They have ten years to repay the loan except in case of equipment loans, which have five years. The application and worksheet is signed by the landowner, technician, and lender and then sent to the district board for approval and finally to the program office for approval.

Some of the practices and equipment that are eligible are: all standard erosion control and prevention practices, new or used no-till drills and planters, earthmoving scrapers, subsoilers, and animal waste systems.

There were 294 payments processed in FY05, for a total of \$97,000 in landowner's interest payments. Of these, 36 percent was for no-till drills, 60 percent was for no-till planters, and four percent was for all other eligible items.

"Other" category included scrapers, ridge-till cultivators and planters, subsoilers, lagoon and deep pit agitation equipment, the attachments necessary to make conventional planting equipment capable of no-till or ridge till, and all standard conservation practices.

There are 64 participating districts leaving 50 districts that have no active loans. The majority of the districts that do not have active loans are located in the

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southern part of the state. The reason that participation may be low in this area is due to the practices used most, such as grass seedings, planned grazing systems, and water impoundment reservoirs practices can be cost-shared through the state's Cost-Share Program, or United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). Since landowners cannot participate in both Loan Interest-Share and Cost-Share together, they choose to use the Cost-Share Program because it offers more return on their money.

The program payments ranged from a low of \$57,377 in 1987, to a high of \$479,688 in 1992. In FY05, the total for payments was \$97,033. The decrease was most likely due to the economy and low interest rates received on invested state funds. Interest rates have ranged from 7.57 percent in 1990 to 1.86 percent in 2005. Low interest rates have affected the expenditures in the Loan Interest-Share Program. The decrease may also be due to the fact that landowners cannot participate in the program twice for the same type of practice or piece of equipment. It is possible that the program is saturated with landowners that have reached their participation limitations. Another reason could be that equipment dealers are offering attractive financing incentives. If potential participants choose to take advantage of special dealer financing, it eliminates them from participating the Loan-Interest Share program. The \$300,000 appropriation for the program was viewed as being adequate to cover current obligations. Currently, there have been 41 payments processed in FY06 for a total of \$14,170 in reimbursements to landowners.

3. FY05 District Assistance Grant Usage

Jim Boschert presented a review of the district assistance grants for FY05. Mr. Boschert proceeded to explain how the districts spent \$7,911,992 that was available for FY05. Of that amount, the districts spent \$7,631,819 or 96 percent of the funds available. The district assistance allocation is divided into the following grants: management services, technical services, administrative expenses, matching, information/education, and the district employee benefit grant, which included health insurance and retirement. During FY05, the districts spent 99 percent of their management services grant, 97 percent of their technical services grant, and 95 percent of their administrative expenses grant. Mr. Boschert stated that each district is given a \$4,000 1:1 matching grant. The districts have until the end of January to propose how they wish to spend the funds. If all the funds are not proposed to be used by the deadline, the commission can release the remaining funds to the districts for additional matching grant requests. Of the \$570,000 that was allocated in the matching grant program, the districts claimed \$529,649. The reason for the high amount

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claimed was because the commission over obligated funds last year in the matching grants program. The total amount received in proposals was \$658,893. For the benefit grant, the districts claimed 89 percent of the funds available for health insurance and 94 percent of the retirement funds. Eighty-five percent of the state district assistance funds were used for personnel, 11 percent was used for other expenses, and four percent was unused.

In response to a question about salaries for district clerks, Sarah Fast stated the next report would cover specifics.

4. FY05 District Financial Summary

Jim Plassmeyer presented a report on the FY05 district financial reports. The information used came from the districts' year-end financial reports that were submitted to the program office.

The 114 districts reported for FY05 a total income of \$12,527,267, which was the fifth year in a row that the districts exceeded \$10,000,000 in their total income. The average, per district, is just over \$109,888 and the maximum that a district reported was \$364,202 and the minimum was \$44,620.

The majority of the districts' local funds come from machine rental and sales income. Machine rental has fluctuated over the past few years. In FY05 machine rental decreased by \$181,965 or 17.5 percent. Sales have continued to decrease until FY05 when there was a slight increase. It was noted that interest earned decreased in FY04, while donations and county commission funds increased in FY05.

The districts had \$12,213,535 in total expenses for FY05 and NRCS also spent \$1,100,000 for office space, utilities, and telephone for 336 district employees. Of the \$12,213,535 total expenses, 75 percent or \$9,300,000 went toward employee salaries. Of the \$9,391,134 employee expenses, 72 percent goes toward gross salaries and 28 percent toward other employee expenses. This includes health insurance, retirement, the district's portion of taxes, workers' compensation, unemployment, travel, and training. For the past year, total income increased by \$535,326, while total expenses increased by \$251,325. Since FY94, income has increased by 53 percent and the expenses by 55 percent. In FY02, expenses exceeded income for the first time and in FY03, income exceeded expenses. It was noted that in FY05, income exceeded expenses by only \$313,732. For FY05, there were 57 districts that had more expenses than income and the remaining 57 had more income than expenses.

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In FY05, 30 districts had 90 percent or more of their funds derived from the state and four districts had 49 percent or less of their funding derived from state funds. There were 12 districts that had over \$100,000 left in their accounts at the end of FY04, and 15 districts had less than \$9,999. The average carryover per district was \$48,077. Over the past years, the average amount of carryover has increased from \$26,958 to \$39,569 in FY01 and dropped in FY02 to \$39,210, and was back up to \$43,667 in FY03 and continues to increase in FY05 to \$48,077.

When asked if a trend line had been looked at over the years per district, Mr. Plassmeyer answered that they had not plotted it out specifically but they could have that available. He stated they track each district.

5. FY05 District Employee Salary Summary

Jim Boschert presented an update on the district employees' salaries and benefit expenses for FY05 that were reported by the districts. Mr. Boschert reviewed the changes in district employee salaries from FY01 to FY06. The most that the total salaries, of all district employees, had increased was FY01 to FY02 in which there was an increase of 13 percent. The estimate for FY05 to FY06 will increase less than one percent of the total \$7,003,226 for salaries.

The average salary for a district clerk in FY01 was \$20,758 compared to \$23,752 in FY06, which is an increase of 14 percent. For the district manager, the average salary in FY01 was \$24,107 compared to \$27,615 in FY06, which is an increase of 14 percent. The average salary for a district technician in FY01 was \$21,216 compared to \$25,303 in FY06, which is an increase of 19 percent.

According to the information for a full-time employee, that works 2080 hours, the salary for a district clerk in Area 4 had the largest increase since 1999. They also pay the most for a district clerk at an average of \$26,639. Area 7 reported the largest percentage increase for the district manager. They had an increase of 54 percent since 1999. The highest average for a district manager was in Area 2 with an amount of \$30,845 since 1999. Area 6 showed the largest increase percentage for a district technician with a 54 percent increase with the largest average salary of \$27,958 since 1999.

In the benefit grant for FY05, the districts claimed \$331,101 for retirement benefits and \$892,605 for health insurance expenses. In FY05, there were 311 district employees that claimed retirement expenses for an average of \$1,064 per

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employee and the average for the 268 employees that claimed health insurance expenses was \$3,330 per employee.

When asked if a comparison of salaries and benefit increase had been prepared, Mr. Boschert answered that they had not looked at those two together, but they have the information to do that. Fred Feldmann asked why districts are expected to earn income so they can pay their employees the compensating wage that other agencies receive. He also stated he felt that there needed to be a drastic overhaul in the way that district employees are compensated and forget sending districts out to make the money needed to pay their employees. He asked if the less than one percent that district employees were going to get was statewide. Mr. Boschert answered they looked at the total dollars projected for salaries. Sarah Fast stated this was why the program wanted to present this to the joint meeting so that they could see what was going on in terms of the trends. She stated they were average trends, not specific. George Engelbach stated that the one-percent was not equitable and would not keep employees. Steve Hopper stated that districts are taking money from their savings to help pay employees. Kathryn Braden stated the last time the administrative funds were looked at, the \$44,000 was the minimum for all districts. She also stated that in Southwest Missouri, several districts tried to operate on \$32,000, and the \$44,000 was enough to hire a good district manager, but not enough to hire a second employee, which all the districts need now. She felt this matter needed to be looked at again. When asked who had the authority to delegate the funds from the state tax, Ms. Brown answered there has to be a budget presented to the legislature, the Governor has to approve it, and then they appropriate it. When asked if the commission made up the budget, Ms. Brown answered that staff did. Ms. Fast reviewed the appropriation process. Mr. Engelbach asked that when budget hearings are held, if the districts could testify, Ms. Fast stated that normally Peggy Lemons attends and represented them. Ms. Lemons stated that at some of the hearings they can testify, some are just to sit and listen, but they usually have someone there at the ones when they can testify. Ms. Braden stated in some of the commission's previous minutes they had stated they would look into more administrative funds in the next budget year. She also asked if it would be appropriate for the commission to make a recommendation on the new budget. Ms. Brown asked when the budget would be drawn up, Ms. Fast stated they would be looking at January for the next budget year, and they might want to keep in mind the renewal issue. Ms. Brown asked if it would be the commission's wish to have staff research this issue or would they rather wait until after the tax passed. Ms. Fast stated she would ask for action at the commission's business meeting.

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6. FY05 Review of Expenses for AgNPS SALT

Ken Struempf presented a report on the Agricultural Nonpoint Source (AgNPS) Special Area Land Treatment (SALT) Program. The purpose of the AgNPS SALT Program is to provide grants to soil and water districts to address agriculture nonpoint source pollution on a watershed basis.

There has been a total of 78 projects funded, 10 have been completed, 53 active, and in July the commission approved 15 new projects. There are two projects remaining from the pilot projects, Saline, and DeKalb. The next call for projects is estimated to be July of 2006. Once the sales tax is renewed, preliminary approval of these applications will be done. He stated that all the SALT dollars were obligated that will be collected through the end of the current sales tax.

The total expenses for the first six calls for FY05 was \$4,800,000, the cost-share portion was \$3,063,416.65, for personnel \$1,504,452.05. Of the \$3,054,826.97 for AgNPS SALT, 61 percent was used for erosion control, five percent for pasture and hayland protection, one percent for other practices, seven percent for animal waste structures, eight percent for buffers, three percent for irrigation, eight percent for pest management, and seven percent for nutrient management.

The total number of AgNPS SALT claims for FY05 was 1,071 claims. Of that amount, 692 were additional practices that are only available in AgNPS SALT projects. Of the total 236 were pest management, 177 for nutrient management, 40 for waste utilization, and two stream stabilization practices.

The total number of regular cost-share practices funded through AgNPS projects for FY05 was 480 claims with terraces having 140 of those. The total amount of AgNPS SALT cost-share dollars for pest management was \$242,916.25 and nutrient management totaled \$164,702.12. The total amount of regular cost-share funds through SALT projects for terraces was \$811,706.66, and water impoundment reservoir was \$581,291.16. The average amount of AgNPS SALT cost-share dollars for pest management was \$1,029.31 per application, nutrient management was \$930.62, and riparian forest buffers was \$7,454.92. The highest was waste management systems at \$23,050.04. In AgNPS SALT, the average amount spent on water impoundment reservoirs was \$5,931.54, planned grazing system with well was \$5,813.44, and terrace systems with tile was \$5,797.90.

The total amount spent in the first call was \$913,195.65 for five projects, second call was \$668,975.62 for eight projects, third call was \$502,345.50 for seven projects, fourth call was \$985,592.23 for 11 projects, fifth call was \$924,131.22

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for 12 projects, sixth call was \$810,509.58 for 13 projects, and the seventh call was \$22,746.41 for 15 planning grants.

D. NRCS

Roger Hansen proceeded to inform the commission and the association on office closures. During the past summer Farm Service Agency (FSA) proposed to close over 1,000 offices nation wide. Missouri's assigned number was 31. The State Director Tim Kelly was looking at how to do that. There was a congressional response to that initiative and was put on a temporary hold. He stated that when congress passed the USDA budget they were going to put some directions in there as to how FSA would proceed in determining office closures. Mr. Hansen stated that he had been directed to do a business analysis on the offices to justify having the office. He stated that his stand-alone offices draw attention plus any office that FSA closes. Mr. Hansen stated that just because FSA closed their half, did not mean Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) would close.

At this point Elizabeth Brown introduces Baughn Merideth the new commissioner.

George Engelbach asked about the partnership with Missouri Department of Conservation if the office was closed, Mr. Hansen answered that they would have to look at that and all of NRCS's partners in the offices.

E. OVERVIEW OF TRAINING CONFERENCE

Bill Wilson presented an overview of the training conference. The theme for the conference was "Posturing for Progress." There were 22 workshops for the conference. Mr. Wilson briefly discussed some of the workshops. Mr. Wilson also went over the agenda for each day of the conference. Mr. Wilson stated there were 677 registered, plus 40 exhibitors.

MISSOURI SOIL AND WATER DISTRICTS COMMISSION MEETING

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Elizabeth Brown called the meeting to order at Tan-Tar-A Resort in Osage Beach, Missouri, in the Parasol I/II Meeting Room at 10:10 AM.

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Elizabeth Brown introduced and welcomed Commissioner Baughn Merideth again and Shelly Woods from the Attorney General's Office and Mike Wells from the Director's Office.

B. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Richard Fordyce made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2005, commission meeting as mailed. Kathryn Braden seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Kathryn Braden, Richard Fordyce, Leon Kreisler, Baughn Merideth, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

C. PLANNING

1. Missouri Soil and Water Information Management System (MoSWIMS) Project Update

Milt Barr presented an update on the MoSWIMS Project. This system consolidated information tracking system, provides a web based program format using internet, the system's tools have a ten plus year life cycle, it eliminated most hardware/software problems for Federal/State/Local Offices, and it allows users direct/real time information.

The planning for the project started in 2002 and was approved by the department in 2004. The project was started June 7, 2005, and the projected end date is March 31, 2006. Mr. Barr indicated that we are about halfway through the nine-month time line for the project and even though the overall status of the project is "Green" it is behind schedule about 23 days.

In addition Mr. Barr briefed the state requirement of an oversight evaluation and plan for any large Information Technology project such as MoSWIMS. The contractor selected to evaluate the project was Ciber Corp. They completed their initial project evaluation and oversight plan on October 1, 2005, and the project was evaluated as "GREEN". The Information Technology and Support Division will implement the oversight plan for the remainder of the project.

D. APPEALS

1. Cost-Share

a. Crawford Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) – Practice Started Prior to Board Approval

Joyce Luebbering presented an appeal from the Crawford board requesting that the commission provide cost-share assistance on two Permanent Vegetative Cover Establishment (DSL-1) Practices when the receipt furnished with the claims showed the practices were started prior to board approval.

State cost-share rule states, “The district board cannot approve an application if construction or implementation of the practice has begun.”

The landowner signed the application on September 21, 2005, and the board signed on October 4, 2005. According to the invoice, work was performed on September 9, 12, October 3, 4, and 5, 2005. On August 17, 2005, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) District Conservationist viewed the sites and it was determined that the fields were eligible for cost-share. The letter from the board stated the operator contacted the district office and was told by the District Manager that it was ok to work on the fields but not to purchase any items prior to board approval of the application. The letter also stated that the fields were old, they had not been worked, and were in rough condition. At that point a vendor was contacted to work the fields. Because of the incorrect information, work was begun on the fields prior to board approval of the cost-share application. Work on the fields was done in September, but due to the dry weather work did not begin again until the area received rain. The first of October the vendor finished working the fields. On October 24, 2005, the practices were certified by NRCS.

Ms. Luebbering informed the commission that similar requests for payment have been requested and granted by the commission.

Elizabeth Brown asked Fannie Lea, from Crawford SWCD, if trees were removed. Ms. Lea answered no, that when she checked with the vendor the only thing that had been used was an offset disk and a field disk. There was no dozing or clearing done. Kathryn Braden asked if Ms. Lea was the one that told the landowner he could start work. Ms. Lea answered yes; she was the only one in the office that works for Crawford. Ms. Braden asked if the landowner had misunderstood or did she think that it had all been approved. Ms. Lea answered no, that when she talked

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to him she said if was ok to work on the fields, they were old fields, she did not know that he was going to disk the fields.

Kathryn Braden made a motion to approve the board's request. John Aylward seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Kathryn Braden, Richard Fordyce, Leon Kreisler, Baughn Merideth, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

b. Grundy SWCD – Landowner Submitted Invoices in Excess of What He Actually Paid

Ron Redden presented an appeal from the Grundy board requesting the commission approve cost-share for a landowner in which the program staff has denied payment.

When the claim was reviewed by program staff it was noticed that an invoice for \$1,402.50 was supported by two cancelled checks; however, the amount of the two checks was considerably less than the amount indicated paid on the bill. The district was contacted for a cancelled check for the difference of \$512.50 used on the practice and another check was needed.

Mr. Redden stated staff denied the claim and made the commission aware that this was an example of a finding from the last audit. Following that audit, a paragraph was added to the cost-share application that landowners sign that states, "Providing false information on invoices or any other documents in the effort to receive reimbursement of state cost-share funds is a criminal offense."

Staff was informed that the reason for the difference was because not all of the items were used on the claim. The district was informed that all the items on the invoice were used on the practice. At that point staff requested a cancelled check or similar documentation showing the bill was paid in full. What the staff received was two new invoices dated August 2nd and 4th that added up to the amount of the two cancelled checks, but they were not prepared until October 13.

According to the board's letter, the difference was caused when the landowner talked the vendor down on the purchase price, but did not request the vendor revise the bill to reflect that the landowner paid less

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than what was on the original invoice. The original \$1,402.50 invoice was presented to the district for preparation of the cost-share claim. Mr. Redden pointed out that the landowner's claim was limited to the \$8,250 commission limit on the water impoundment reservoir and he would not have received more than what he was entitled to. He also stated that the claim included \$1,170 for ineligible clearing work that staff removed from the allowable cost on the claim. After staff reviewed the claim, the eligible cost for the practice was reduced to \$12,489.41, which was enough to earn the commission's limit of \$8,250 for the practice.

John Rice from Grundy SWCD stated that they were at fault in failing to check the invoices and in adding the two checks together. He stated that communication was an issue with the landowner. He informed the commission that the clerk had always had problems communicating with the landowner. He pointed out that the best that they could understand was that the landowner explained to them that he thought he had an agreed upon price for the pipes. But when he received the invoice it was higher than what he thought he was to pay. The landowner contacted the pipe company and received the corrected price and that was what he wrote the checks for, but he did not get another invoice.

Richard Fordyce made a motion to approve the cost-share claim, at the proper amount, and direct staff to send the board a letter bringing to their attention the need to give more detailed attention to the claims being approved for payment. Baughn Merideth seconded the motion. A poll vote was taken. Kathryn Braden, Richard Fordyce, Leon Kreisler, Baughn Merideth, Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and John Aylward voted against the motion. The motion passed with five in favor and one opposed.

E. REVIEW/EVALUATION

1. Land Assistance

a. Cost-Share

1. Monthly Cost-Share Usage Report

Noland Farmer reported that districts have been allocated approximately \$24,000,000 for use in the present fiscal year. It was projected that \$20,000,000 of the allocated funds would be claimed. The projection was based on amounts claimed in previous years in relation to the total allocations made available to the districts.

As of October 31, \$2,400,000 in claims had been processed, which was \$600,000 short of what was projected.

As of November 22, the program office had received \$3,600,000 in claims, which is less than the \$3,800,000 claimed for the same time last year.

2. NRCS Revisions to the Terrace Standard Regarding Topsoiling

Ron Redden presented a review of the commission's current policy on topsoiling terraces. Mr. Redden pointed out that the commission's current policy generally does not extend cost-share eligibility to topsoiling.

Commission rule states that the practices for which cost-share is provided will be constructed in accordance with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) standards. Mr. Redden stated that NRCS had made some revision to the terrace practice standard and there are instances in which topsoil will be required for the landowner to complete the practice and NRCS needs to certify the practice as meeting specs before the cost-share payment can be made. According to Mr. Redden, next month districts will be calculating the county average costs for cost-share components for the next year and there will be a component for topsoiling when required. Because of this, staff needed a concurrence from the commission as to whether or not this component would be eligible for state cost-share assistance.

It has been commission policy on terraces that cost-share not be provided on topsoiling unless the terrace had critical area seeding. The reason for this was that it was believed that topsoiling was not absolutely necessary for erosion control, but done to increase production and as a result, should not be an item paid with cost-share assistance.

Dick Purcell the NRCS State Engineer stated that currently they install terraces to reduce the loss of topsoil and conserve the existing topsoil on the terrace. Previous practice standards did not address conserving topsoil. In the past, this portion had been in

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part of the standard called consideration, which is not a mandatory requirement. This summer when the new terrace practice standard was issued, topsoiling was moved to the criteria section which must be considered when they design or install terrace systems. A benefit of the topsoil layer is that it improves the water holding capacity of the soil. Another is that it makes efficient use of soil nutrients. These two have been combined to help improve water quality and it maintains productivity of the soil. Mr. Purcell proceeded to cover some terrace designs with the commission. According to Mr. Purcell, he stated that the sites would be on a case by case bases. The technicians and conservationist planners will have to go out and evaluate the available topsoil and the soil type to see if it is a necessary step in installing the terrace. Mr. Purcell stated that NRCS soil staff has identified 49 different types of soil where topsoiling should be considered. The next thing was the need for sufficient topsoil present to make it work. The guideline that they are going to put out to the field is that there must be at least four inches of topsoil present to consider it. The estimate by NRCS is \$0.25-\$0.35 per foot. The difference there would be on the topsoil depth, and the front slope and the cut-slope length.

Roger Hansen stated that they had been working on this specification and he had signed off on it as a good technical practice. He stated he was going to put it into their Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) standards and specifications, and the average cost list. Brad McCord asked if this would in anyway effect an individual's interest or eligibility for continued CRP if they wanted grass terraces. Mr. Hansen answered that he did not think there was a conflict, but he would talk to staff.

John Aylward made a motion to revise policy and provide cost-share for the topsoil component on any terrace where NRCS has determined that it is necessary in order for the practice to meet standards. Kathryn Braden seconded the motion.

Richard Fordyce asked Mr. Purcell how they determine the cost per foot estimate on the additional cost. Mr. Purcell answered that they did an analysis using production rates and what they normally do to put in terraces, and the other input was from contractors that did topsoil terraces. When asked how prevalent the 49 soils were

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in the high terrace building area, Mr. Purcell answered approximately 9 million acres in the state were covered by the 49 soil types. Mr. Hansen asked what the average cost was per lineal foot for terraces without topsoiling. Mr. Purcell answered approximately \$1.49.

When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Kathryn Braden, Richard Fordyce, Leon Kreisler, Baughn Merideth, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of the FY06 Practice List

Allan Clarke presented a list of eligible practices for approval. The commission is required by regulation each year to affirm or modify the list of eligible practices available to the districts. The last time this was done was at the November 2004 meeting.

Mr. Redden provided the commission with the list of practices that are currently offered. The commission has sometimes in the past removed practices that were not being used. Other times, the commission has left them on the list because they are good conservation practices, even though not often used.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2005, the commission chose to remove the cropland protective cover practice, which was last used two times in FY00 and had previously been used only six times since FY93. The commission chose to keep the forest plantation practice, which had been used, nine times in the last five years.

Kathryn Braden made a motion to approve the same list of practices for FY06 that was made available in FY05. John Aylward seconded the motion.

Leon Kreisler asked if there was any talk about adding any practices. Sarah Fast answered that there were none in the association's new resolution or any letters from districts. John Aylward stated that there has always been interest in streambank erosion and that was the only one he knew of. Ms. Fast informed the commission they could always add practices.

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When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Kathryn Braden, Richard Fordyce, Leon Kreisler, Baughn Merideth, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

F. REQUESTS

1. Land Assistance

a. Cost-Share

1. Gasconade SWCD – Add Tile to an Existing Terrace System

Joyce Luebbering presented a request from the Gasconade board asking the commission to authorize cost-share on an existing terrace system.

State cost-share policy states, “If the board of supervisors desires to approve cost-share assistance for installation of tile in an existing waterway or terrace, they must obtain approval from the commission.

NRCS must certify that the existing waterway or terrace required the addition of tile to preserve the life span of the practice, or that the tile is necessary to control erosion.

The maintenance life span of the practice starts when the board approves the claim for the tile installation.”

According to the letter from the district, the terrace system was constructed in 1985, and is not under a maintenance agreement. Ms. Luebbering stated that in past instances an addition of tile to an existing waterway was approved for practices experiencing active gully erosion, which this one is not. According to the district conservationist, if steps are not taken to stop the current erosion problem, active gully erosion will result. What the District Conservationist recommended was installing new underground pipe. The board stated they felt that installing 330 feet of eight-inch Schedule 35 pipe was necessary to stop the current erosion problems. Based on the current county average cost, the amount for the practice would not exceed \$1,227.33. The cause of the failure was not known.

Ms. Luebbering stated that in the past, the commission has approved similar requests where active gully erosion was already

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occurring, but this was the first time a request has been made to provide tile in an existing terrace system to prevent erosion that will occur if measures are not taken.

Diana Mayfield from Gasconade stated the landowner had been having problems for years. He fixed one hole on his own, but they continue to show up. The district's conservationist has talked to the state office about it. Leon Kreisler asked what the commission's policy was for repairing terraces, Sarah Fast answered the commission has approved them with active erosion occurring, but not as a preventive measure. In terms of general maintenance, she stated that had been an issue they have struggled with in the past. Steve Oetting stated that 70 percent of their practices use tile and they have practices that have been in the ground 15-25 years. The landowner has done a good job in maintaining berm heights, but the tile has failed. He stated it is hard to tell a landowner they can not do that until the whole system fails. Mr. Oetting stated he was asking the commission to establish criteria for tile replacement based on a decision by the district conservationist or someone that the tile had failed. He stated he knew it was against the commission's current policy, but it is a problem that is going to be seen. John Aylward asked Mr. Oetting if this would be a county option. Mr. Oetting answered he did not think his county could justify just replacing tile, because they do not have the erosion. Ms. Fast stated that it would not follow the commission's rules and policy. She informed the commission that it would require a rule change. Currently, the commission was looking at it on a case by case basis. Mr. Aylward stated you have erosion or you would not be replacing the tile. When asked what kind of erosion this would be Mr. Hansen answered it would be sheet and rill erosion. Ms. Fast stated that program staff would be glad to research the issue if the commission wished. Ms. Brown asked if the commission wished for staff to bring more information back.

Kathryn Braden made a motion to grant a variance to this request. Leon Kreisler seconded the motion.

Richard Fordyce stated he would suggest that they use the corrugated roll pipe. Ms. Luebbering stated the only problem that the board had about the corrugated pipe was that they were afraid

the rocks would break through the plastic pipe. Ms. Brown stated she would be more comfortable getting more information on how the commission would change their policy.

A poll vote was taken. John Aylward, Kathryn Braden, and Leon Kreisler voted in favor of the motion and Richard Fordyce, Baughn Merideth, and Elizabeth Brown voted against the motion. Failing to receive four favorable votes, the motion did not carry.

Ms. Brown stated the commission would want staff to provide information on policy and a rule change. Ms. Fast stated staff would look into it and provide the commission with more statewide options to look at.

2. Knox SWCD – Assistance From the Commission in Seeking a Landowner’s Cost-Share Repayment

Ron Redden presented a request from Knox SWCD asking for assistance from the commission in seeking repayment from a landowner for a violation of a maintenance agreement.

The commission’s rule states that if the commission finds that the maintenance agreement has been violated, the commission shall give the landowner 30 days in which to either correct all deficiencies at the landowner’s expense or repay the cost-share amount. If at the end of the 30 days, the practice does not meet NRCS standards or the commission has not received repayment, the commission may refer the matter to the Missouri Attorney General’s Office for recovery of the state funds.

On July 27, 2004, the landowner applied for state cost-share for a water impoundment reservoir. Then on October 14, 2004 the structure was certified and the board approved the claim on October 25, 2004.

NRCS did a quality review in the summer of 2005 and found that the structure did not meet specifications. Since the visual inspection in October 2004, the landowner had welded an additional two-foot upright on the inlet pipe resulting in the inlet being higher than the emergency spillway. He also added two two-foot culverts in the emergency spillway so the emergency spillway

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could be crossed in a vehicle. Lastly, it was identified that the backslope of the dam was built to a 2.6 to 1 slope instead of the 3 to 1 slope required to meet NRCS specifications so as to allow the structure to be mowed and maintained safely.

The landowner was sent a letter on July 18, 2005, from the Knox board giving him until September 16, 2005, to make three corrections that were necessary for the structure to meet NRCS specifications. A site visit on August 29, 2005, indicated the corrections were not made and a reminder letter was sent on September 9, 2005.

Dick Purcell stated this was where a landowner modified the practice after it had been approved. According to Mr. Purcell the landowner needed to remove the blockage in the emergency spillway, and cut the spillway pipe off at a minimum. Those are things that would not be allowed anyway. He had less of an issue with the slope compared to the other things.

John Aylward made a motion that if the commission concurs that the practice was not meeting specification, that they request the landowner to either bring the practice to specification or repay a prorated cost-share amount of \$3,295 within 30 days or the matter would be referred to the MO AGO with the omission to drop the specification of the 2.6 slope rather than a 3, but enforce the spillway pipe, and the discharge pipe. Richard Fordyce seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Kathryn Braden, Richard Fordyce, Leon Kreisler, Baughn Merideth, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

b. SALT

1. Pettis SWCD – Increase Watershed Boundary for Camp Branch and Basin Fork AgNPS SALT

April Brandt presented a request from Pettis SWCD for the commission to allow them to expand the watershed boundary for Camp Branch and Basin Fork Agricultural Nonpoint Source (AgNPS) Special Area Land Treatment (SALT) Project.

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Ms. Brandt stated the project was in its fifth year. Commission policy that was in effect at the time the project was approved stated, "The proposed AgNPS SALT area must be a complete watershed or sub-watershed of manageable size to be considered for an AgNPS SALT project." Current policy states that, "The proposed AgNPS SALT area must be a complete watershed, sub-watershed, or 14 digit Hydrologic Unit (HUC) for manageable size to be considered for an AgNPS SALT project."

In the board's letter dated October 13, 2005, the Camp Branch and Basin Fork AgNPS SALT Project did not include the entire hydrologic unit 10300103010003. The current project area includes only the two watersheds, which drain Camp Branch and Basin Fork creeks, excluding an area of approximately 6,100 acres of the HUC. According to the board, they want to include the eastern end of the HUC. They state that this area contains a significant amount of agricultural land with would otherwise never be eligible for a SALT project if the board continues to apply for projects based upon HUC boundaries.

In the interest of water quality, curbing soil erosion, and in fairness to the landowners in that area, the board requested to include those acres as part of the Camp Branch and Basin Fork AgNPS SALT Project for the remainder of the project's life. The proposed area is roughly 2,135 acres of cropland and 2,745 acres of grassland, 500 acres woodland, 450 urban acres, 50 acres in CRP, 30 acres public, and 190 acres classified as other.

According to district staff, this area shares many of the same nonpoint source pollution problems as the rest of the project. They plan to treat 1,000 acres of cropland, 660 acres of pasture/hayland, and 100 acres of woodland in the area using the existing practices available in the project area.

Ms. Brandt stated the district was made aware that the goals for this project were quite lofty, but if approved it may make the original goals more attainable. At the last reporting period, the project was 39.85 percent complete which was above the minimum of 38 percent needed.

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Elizabeth Brown asked if this was the first time a request like this had been received. Ms. Brandt answered this was the first formal request that she knew of. Kathryn Braden asked what the maximum acreage for a SALT area was, and with the additional acreage how many acres would this project be. Ms. Brandt answered there is not a set maximum acreage for SALT projects, but they recommend watersheds up to roughly 40,000 – 60,000 acres. Ms. Brandt stated staff looks at the acres needing treatment for a proposed project, as well as the size, in regards to is the area is big enough to make a difference, and not so large that we can not adequately treat the acres needing treatment with our funding. The total number of acres for Pettis would be roughly 32,000 acres if the addition were included. When asked if this area had been looked at to see if it fits the proper description the commission needs to have, Ms. Brandt answered that they had asked the board to evaluate land use for the acres to be added, acres needing treatment, and acres to be treated. The board provided staff with that information and stated in their letter that this area contained a significant amount of agricultural land.

Richard Fordyce made a motion to approve the board's request with the existing project goals, and allow the district to count any future progress completed in the proposed area toward the project goals. Kathryn Braden seconded the motion.

Brad McCord stated that from the Missouri Department of Conservation's respect, Flat Creek is a priority stream, and watershed in Pettis County.

When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Kathryn Braden, Richard Fordyce, Leon Kreisler, Baughn Merideth, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

2. District Assistance

a. Sullivan SWCD – Matching Grant Request

Jim Plassmeyer presented a request from Sullivan SWCD asking to have a portable livestock corral system added to the list of eligible items to be purchased with matching grant funds.

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The intent of the Matching Grant Program is to provide an incentive for districts to develop local sources of funding for a 1:1 matching grant while stimulating new and/or continued local funding for programs and activities. At the beginning of the fiscal year, each district has \$5,000 available to them for a 1:1 matching grant for which they need to submit proposals indicating how they wish to spend the money. After a proposal is approved, the district can purchase items submitted on the proposal and submit a claim against the matching grant. When the expense is claimed, the commission will match the expense dollar for dollar up to the maximum of \$5,000. Districts have until the end of the fiscal year to make purchases that are on the matching grant proposal and claims must also be submitted also during the fiscal year.

The commission has approved a list of eligible expenses that may be included on the matching grant proposals. Mr. Plassmeyer pointed out that the portable livestock corral system was not on the eligible machinery and this is the first time this equipment has been requested in the matching grant program. Some of the eligible machinery is no-till drill and planter, mulcher, rotary cutter, sprayer, seeder, soil aerator, bermuda grass sprigger, and lagoon agitator. Most of these items are rented out to landowners to generate local funds.

According to the district's letter, the district stated that in their county livestock is one of the primary agricultural commodities and they felt this item would be a great asset to the landowners. The letter also stated that other surrounding counties might be interested in purchasing a system. The estimated cost for the system was \$8,000.

When asked if there had been any evidence supporting the request that this would reduce soil loss and improve water quality, Mr. Plassmeyer answered there was nothing definite that showed that. He stated he had talked to the supervisor and the supervisor thought the impact would be in the fact that you would not be in one location every time you loaded cattle.

Leon Kreisler made a motion to deny the board's request. Kathryn Braden seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Kathryn Braden, Richard Fordyce, Leon Kreisler, Baughn Merideth, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

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b. Montgomery SWCD – District Employee Benefit Grant Request

Jim Boschert presented a request from Montgomery SWCD asking the commission to reconsider the health insurance rates for calendar year 2006.

Mr. Boschert stated that Montgomery had four employees using the benefit grant for health insurance. Of the four, one was using Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan (MCHCP) and the other three were using other vendors for health insurance. The rates are as follow: the one with MCHCP pays \$383.02, one pays \$588.56, one pays \$366.00, and the last pays \$193.46.

In September the commission followed the recommendation of the benefit committee for the district that had a MCHCP rate in 2005, would be given a MCHCP rate for 2006. The current rate for Montgomery is \$373.02 for calendar year 2005 and will decrease to \$343.49 for calendar year 2006. Montgomery is one of 19 districts that had their rate decrease by this amount.

In the letter from the district, they asked why rates varied from district to district and the ones that surrounded Montgomery had higher rates. The letter also stated that they felt that rates should be the same statewide, because the work that the district employees do is similar and that they are being penalized.

Mr. Boschert informed the commission that Peggy Lemons and he had met with MCHCP and were told that the rates for 2006 were based on the number of claims made by the district employees against their health insurance provider in 2004.

Both Montgomery and Warren SWCD letters stated that they believed the rates should be the same statewide. Mr. Boschert presented the commission with a scenario of a statewide average rate. According to that information, there were 62 district employees that had rates that exceeded the average amount in the first quarter of the current fiscal year.

Ben Reed from the benefit committee stated that the committee met to consider the appeal of the Montgomery SWCD. He stated that since the conception of the benefit grant, the committee has been faced with the continued dilemma of inconsistent statewide rates offered by MCHP. He stated several districts have previously faced similar reductions in eligible

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benefit grant funds due to reduced rates by MCHP, even when employee's private insurance rates may have increased. The goal of the benefit program was to insure that district employees could be offered health insurance. Mr. Reed stated it was the recommendation of the benefit committee to make no change in the current policy.

Tom Kramer from Montgomery SWCD stated that by using one entity for rates across the state was forcing everyone to use this one entity makes it a monopoly. They also disliked the idea that it creates classes of employees in different counties, even though they do the same work.

Richard Fordyce stated he serves on the benefit committee as the commission's representative and this issue is serious. But when they put together a budget request, they have to have some way to compile rates and MCHP had been the carrier chosen a few years back.

Failing to receive a motion current policy remained in force.

G. FOLLOW-UP

Sarah Fast asked if the commission wished to follow-up with the previous discussion in regard to district employee salaries.

Elizabeth Brown asked the commission what they wished on the salary request. Kathryn Braden stated she felt the commission needed to look into it for the up coming budget session even though the renewal of the sales tax would be coming up in August.

It was the wish of the commission to have staff research the issue and provided the commission information with which they could make a decision.

Ms. Fast informed the commission that there was one resolution in regard to this issue that the association would be voting on.

H. REPORTS

1. NRCS

Roger Hansen stated he received his 2006 budget. His allocation for Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), cost-share program, and farm bill programs totaled just under \$50,000,000. This amount was up from the last year. He received \$5,500,000 for the watershed program, which is the highest ever received. On the salary side it was not as good. They are down by about

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\$3,000,000 from what they spent last year. On EQIP he received just under \$18,500,000 and that was what they received last year.

2. MASWCD

Tom Lambert stated the association was working on the soils and park tax, and employee retention and salaries.

3. UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

Dave Baker stated they have a new interim Director of Extension, Dr. Jo Turner. She will fill the position until a permanent Director is named. He also invited the commissioners to the extension breakfast.

Mr. Baker stated that in regard to the extension staffing, they have gone to an incremental fill.

He informed the commission that Ag Science week would be January 30 – February 3, 2006.

Elizabeth Brown asked if it would be good for the commission to split up to attend the extension and chairman's breakfast. Mr. Baker answered it was a commission call.

4. MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Brad McCord stated the department was going to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Missouri Ag Industries Council. The council will travel the state in February and March providing conservation contractor training.

5. STAFF

Sarah Fast informed the commission that the program had some new staff. Bill Wilson introduced Tricia Jackson and Cody Tebbenkamp who are the new district coordinators.

Elizabeth Brown congratulated Leon Kreisler on his reappointment.

Kathryn Braden stated it was exciting and she was honored to speak to the Secretary of Agriculture.

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Ms. Brown stated she would not be able to attend the March 21, 2006 commission meeting. Sarah Fast stated the next commission meeting was scheduled for January 18, 2006.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Richard Fordyce moved the meeting be adjourned. John Aylward seconded the motion. Motion approved by consensus at 12:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah E. Fast, Director
Soil and Water Conservation Program

Approved by:

Elizabeth Brown, Chairman
Missouri Soil & Water Districts Commission

/tm